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A Psychoanalytical Approach to *The Sound and the Fury*

《喧哗与骚动》的心理解读

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Synopsis

As an outstanding representative of American Southern writers, William Faulkner is impelled by his deep obsessions with the South to describe the frustrations and helplessness of Southerners in confrontation with historical changes within his “own little postage stamp of native soil”. *The Sound and the Fury* conveys exactly the loss and corruption of Southern honor and morals by means of monologues of the Compson brothers. It is usually selected by Faulkner as his favorite, the book he has “the most tenderness for”, for the very reason that, this novel is in Faulkner’s mind the most meaningful one and moreover, it involves painstaking efforts and more stylistic innovations of the author. Although the characters whose conflicting mind mirrors the chaotic world especially have received diverse analysis and studies, *The Sound and the Fury* is still of strong artistic charms and extremely deep connotations. Based on psychoanalytical interpretation and sociological psychology, this dissertation is intended to analyze the mind-styles of the Compson brothers, to explore Faulkner’s dare experimentation and innovations in modernist narrative techniques, and furthermore, to reveal Faulkner’s covert psychological tendencies in writing this novel.

Chapter One is devoted to the analysis of the personalities and mind-styles of the Compson brothers, pointing out that, situated in such a family lacking love, they all suffer from psychic trauma in a way or another and their mental deficiencies render different mind-styles: standing for the part of “id” in Freudian personality construct, Benjy the idiot exhibits the mind-style of mental retardation caused by psychic impotence and mental retardation; Quentin, who shoulders the responsibility of maintaining the family honor and traditional morals, manifests some characteristics of the “ego”, and lives in a split world, trying desperately to balance himself between feeling and thinking, between tradition and violence, and thus exhibiting the mind-style and narrative style of schizophrenia; while as far as Jason

is concerned, he exhibits some characteristics of “super-ego”, aspiring to cool-heartedly repress freedom and satisfying of “desires” and trying every means to accumulate wealth and therefore Jason unfolds us the mind-style and narrative style of paranoia. Chapter Two centers on two female figures: Caddy and Dilsey. On the one hand, Faulkner creates Caddy as a figure who is deprived of the right of narrating her own story and is doomed to destruction in the masculinity-centered society. On the other, through Caddy’s tragedy, Faulkner intends to criticize the Southern society, foretelling its decay and corruption, and tries to find the way out for it—to pin his hope on Dilsey, bearing in hope that she can set the example for women and symbolize the future for the South. Chapter Three is devoted to the analysis of Faulkner’s experimentation in modernist narrative techniques. Faulkner uses modernist techniques such as “stream of consciousness”, “composite narrative structure”, “multiple points of view”, “free association”, and “displacement of time sequence” to fulfill the perfect congruency between form and content. The last chapter concentrates upon the analysis of some overt and covert psychological tendencies in Faulkner’s creating this novel, and accordingly we can see from it Faulkner’s autonomous complexity and inferiority complex in writing the novel and the masculinity-centered discourse reflected in Faulkner himself.

Through the analysis of the Compson children, through the various psychological abnormalities and predicaments, we see that in the epic-like novel *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner depicts the shattering of the whole southern social and value system. However, the artistic charm of the novel lies far beyond this. What’s more important, it lies in that, Faulkner confronts ideas, impressions, memories of characters to readers in a direct way without comment and explanation, enabling them to experience the “deformed” psyches of characters; and taking an overall look at Faulkner’s artistic techniques, we are prone to be moved by the psychological tendencies Faulkner exhibits as a novelist.

Key Words: mind-style; perspective on women; composite narrative structure; psychological tendency

摘要

作为美国南方作家的杰出代表，福克纳对南方乡土深厚的依恋之情，使他力图通过那片“邮票般大小”的地方来描写南方人与历史碰撞中的困惑和孤独。《喧哗与骚动》就是通过康普生一家的独白来传达南方荣誉、道德失落的信息。福克纳一再强调这部小说是他“最有感情”的一部，因为就福克纳而言，这部小说寓意最为深刻，而且在艺术表现上使他倾注了无数的心血和艺术创造力。小说中的人物以自我的内心冲突映射了混乱的外部世界，虽已历经众多文论家的研究和分析，仍具有很强的艺术魅力和极深的个性内涵。本文运用心理分析、社会心理学等诸方面的理论，来解析康普生三兄弟的性格特征及其独特的心理模式，然后分析了福克纳在该作品中对现代派创作技巧的大胆创新和独辟蹊径，并在此基础上进一步探讨了在其独特的艺术风格和创作技巧下所隐含的作者的创作心理动势。

第一章着重分析了康普生家三兄弟的叙事风格及其心理模式，指出他们都因处在这样一个缺乏正确的爱的家庭环境中而心灵受到严重创伤，心智上的不健全使得他们各自表现出迥异的心理模式：班吉代表着弗洛伊德人格学说中的“本我”部分，生理上的无能和心理发育的不健全造就了他如同三岁小孩般的叙事风格和心理模式；而对于代表肩负维系家族荣誉和传统道德观念责任的“本我”的昆丁来说，他始终生活在一个被割裂的世界里，试图在感情与理智、传统与反抗之间寻求平衡，因而表现出一种精神分裂般的心理模式和叙事风格；杰生则具有“超我”的一些特征，表现出对自由和快乐的抑制而变得冷漠无情、惟利是图，因而表现出偏执狂似的心理模式和叙事特点。第二章集中分析了福克纳所塑造的两位女性角色：凯蒂和迪尔西。作者一方面把凯蒂塑造成一个没有话语权、成为以男性为中心社会的一个附属品和牺牲品的角色；另一方面通过凯蒂的悲剧来批判南方社会及其摧残女人的错误的妇女观，预言南方的衰亡，又为它寻找出路一把希望寄托在迪尔西的身上，希望她既是女人的榜样，又是南方的未来。第三章则分析了福克纳在《喧哗与骚动》中对现代主义叙事技巧

的大胆创新，在掘进人物的内心活动上达到了新的高度。作者运用“意识流”、“复合式叙事结构”、“多角度叙事”、“自由联想”、“时序倒置”等现代主义艺术手段，使内容与形式达到了最为完美的统一。最后一章则从创作心理的角度探讨了福克纳在该小说创作中明显或不明显的心理动势，不仅映射了作者的自主、自卑情结，同时也可以从中窥视出作者身上不可抹杀的男性为中心的心理。

通过对康普生一代人的心理分析，通过这代人的种种变态心理和精神困境，福克纳以《喧哗与骚动》这样一部史诗般的作品，再现了南方社会准则和道德体系的崩溃。然而小说的真正魅力并非局限于此，更多的在于福克纳一方面通过意识流手法把小说中人物的想法、印象、记忆不经评论整理和说明直接呈现于读者的眼前，让读者体验到人物残缺不全的心理世界，另一方面又通过多种艺术手法的创新来满足作为小说家艺术创作的心理动势，使我们不仅为小说的艺术魅力和思想内涵所叹羡，同时也为作者的真诚和不懈的艺术追求而深深打动。

关键词：心理模式； 女性观；复合式叙事结构；心理动势

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Introduction

As one of the most outstanding American modernist writers, William Faulkner has been receiving attention from numerous scholars and critics. A kind of cultural study which is called “subject of Faulkner” has come into our view. In his works, Faulkner not only describes social changes of American South, but the frustration and helplessness of the Southerners. *The Sound and the Fury*, generally regarded as one of the greatest fictional works of the twentieth century, is usually selected by Faulkner himself as his most beloved book. By employing almost perfectly the technique of stream of consciousness this novel permits unmediated access to psyches damaged beyond repair.

William Faulkner was born in a prestigious family on September 25, 1897, in New Albany, Mississippi, the first of four sons. Mississippi, with some fictional modifications, was a prototype of Jefferson in the mythical county of Yoknapatawpha, the setting of *Sartoris* and most of his subsequent works. His great-grandfather Colonel William Cuthbert Faulkner had a notable career as a prominent soldier both in the Mexican War and the Civil War, and then enjoyed ongoing success in business and local government election. His grandfather was a lawyer, banker and government official. These two are obviously the origins for Colonel Sartoris and Bayard Sartoris, the unconquered men in *Sartoris*, *The Unvanquished* and in many other stories. While time came to his parents, the family fame and reputation began to decline.

In 1902, the Faulkner family came to Oxford. Young William Faulkner attended school with little enthusiasm and stayed in high school for only a couple of years, so his father got him a job as a bookkeeper in the First National Bank of Oxford which his grandfather had helped establish and had served as its first president. While Faulkner’s education did not cease as he made friends with a young Oxford lawyer

named Phil Stone, a graduate of Yale University and a man of somewhat cultivated literary taste who provided him with some of the first reading matter, which would help shape his talent. His friendship with Stone gave him a chance for literary discussions, brought him awareness of the rising reputation of some writers and actually initiated him into his literary career. In 1918, William Faulkner traveled to Canada to enlist in the Royal Air Force after having been rejected by the aviation branch of the United States Signal Corps. The First World War was concluded, however, before he completed training as a pilot but not soon enough to prevent the novice flyer from wrecking a plane in an accident. He returned to Oxford and enrolled as a special student at the University of Mississippi for the 1919-20 academic years. During this period, he contributed many poems to the student newspaper *The Mississippian*. Then Faulkner decided to return to Oxford to serve between December 1921, and October 1924, as postmaster at the University. Through the financial patronage of his friend Phil Stone, Faulkner's first book, a collection of poems named *The Marble Faun* saw print in 1924. Despite a failure that the book turned out to be, he didn't terminate his efforts at verse completely, and then he left Oxford to settle temporarily in New Orleans which was the gathering place of a host of young writers and intellectuals including Sherwood Anderson, the most influential figure on the American literary scene at that time. In June 1925, Faulkner sailed with a friend for Italy and made a walking trip through France and Germany, accomplishing the dream of the European trip.

In 1926, recommended by Sherwood Anderson, Faulkner returned home in Oxford in time for the publication of his first novel *Soldier's Pay*. It was received favorably but sold poorly. The second novel *Mosquitoes* didn't win him encouraging publication. While in the composition of his third novel, he began to draw upon his knowledge of local Mississippi history and the experiences of members of his own family. With *Sartoris* published in January 1929, Faulkner created his literary cosmos: his "own little postage stamp of native soil". As he said, "I discovered that my own little postage stamp of native soil was worth writing about and I would

never live long enough to exhaust it and by sublimating the actual into the apocryphal, I would have complete liberty to use whatever talent I might have to its absolute top. It opened up a gold mine of other people, so I created a cosmos of my own” (Wu Weiren 89). This brought into light that he had found his subject matter and had now but to give rein to the marvelous range of his natural stylistic ability. Accidentally at first, but later in a more methodical fashion, he began to construct his fictional chronicle of Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi. Situated in Oxford for the largest part of his remaining career, Faulkner married in June, 1929, his childhood sweet-heart and lately-divorced Estelle Oldham Franklin. The manuscript of his technically finest and most profoundly brilliant novel, *The Sound and the Fury* had been completed in September, 1928, and by the time it was published in October, 1929, he had finished the first version of *Sanctuary* and was well into *As I Lay Dying* to be published in October, 1930, and then wrote *Light in August* in 1932, *Absalom, Absalom!* in 1936, *The Unvanquished* in 1938, *The Hamlet* in 1940 and *Go down, Moses* in 1942. During the ten-year period of Faulkner’s productive creation, his bold experiments in the dislocation of narrative time and his use of stream-of-consciousness technique placed him in the forefront of the avant-garde. In 1950, Faulkner was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, and many other prizes followed. On July 6, 1962, three weeks after being thrown from a horse, he died in Oxford, Mississippi.

People at the modern age tend to face more spiritual plights and moral anxieties than people of the past. Unlike other writers of the modernist school, William Faulkner in his great works not only gives a full description of the plights of his contemporaries, but points out for them the way of getting out of the plights, that is, returning to eternity, returning to the part of tradition which bears great vitality. In his opinion, there are eternal truths in the traditional system, as stated in his address upon receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature, “courage and honor and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of the past” (Tao Jie 361). And he holds in belief that only the glory of the past can help the contemporary

people to live like a man in the present wasteland-like society.

Faulkner is a Southern writer who cherishes traditional ideas. In possession of the traditional value system, he is in great agonies over the loss of traditional ideas. His childhood in the South County Oxford and his access to some legends handed down on from elder generations cause his intimate familiarity with the Southern history and his nostalgic favor of the past. However, the coming of the First World War and the modern era demolishes the traditional value system and moral codes which have been deeply rooted in the mind of the southerners including Faulkner himself. People lives in a world filled with confusion, hatred, loss, alienation and crimes. They lose the belief and courage of living, and even feel the meaninglessness of life itself at the collapsing of the Southern society. Faulkner endeavors to describe the plights of modern people. While at the same time, he ceaselessly searches from the tradition something good for saving modern people. He believes that only “the glory of the past” can help the contemporaries overcome problems of their own and society, and thus can prevent the loss of moral value, or in his own words, only the glory of the past can help people endure and prevail.

The novel that established Faulkner’s reputation as a prominent figure in American literature, *The Sound and the Fury* is often regarded as his most successful work. Praised for its complex structure as well as its penetrating examination of human character, this novel obscures distinctions between past and present by employing non-chronological narration, stream-of-consciousness techniques, and multiple points of view. The work focuses upon the deterioration of the Compsons, a Mississippi family destroyed by lack of love, selfishness, and an obsession with the lost Southern nobility. It epitomizes the pains and struggles of the Southerners in their efforts to reconstruct their lives after the total demolition of the original social system and moral norms.

The novel has four sections. The first three sections are narrated respectively by the three Compson brothers on four separate days: Benjy a sterile idiot, on his thirty-third birthday, is immersed in memory of the past; Quentin an intelligent but

oversensitive suicidal and disappointed idealist, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is preparing himself for suicide; Jason a cruel survivor of a decayed family, who works in a store, is desperately tracking his niece Quentin. The fourth section is narrated by the omniscient writer. The three Compson's narrations are mainly about Caddy Compson—her fall and penetration, their world of childhood, and their reactions to the intrusion of Caddy's maturity. However, Caddy, the very central figure who is omnipresent in the narration, is deprived of the right to tell her own tragic story. It is Caddy's loss of virginity that brings a fatal attack to the Compson family which is on the verge of breakdown. It makes all the family members suffer from losses. Benjy loses his beloved sister and favorite pasture and finally gets castrated. Quentin loses his idealistic value system and eventually drowns himself. Jason loses a promising job and then the money he embezzled and accumulated. Mr. Compson ends up in death by getting addicted in drinking. Caddy herself loses her virginity, becomes homeless and finally is reduced to the mistress of a German Nazi official. In writing this outstanding psychological novel, William Faulkner uses the stream of consciousness almost to its perfection so as to reveal the suffering and spiritual trauma of the Compson family in face of changes. At the same time, the technique itself is the modernist equivalent of "free association" in Sigmund Freud's terminology, a major technique of psychoanalysis. What's more, seen from the actualization that Faulkner the author regards this novel as his favorite and makes relentless efforts to adopt varied writing techniques in order to explicitly show his ability of novel creation completely on his own artistic beliefs and his instinctual satisfaction as an artist, there is no denying to say that there dwells a psychological tendency upon Faulkner's writing *The Sound and the Fury*. Thus the psychological or more exactly the Freudian approach is justifiably available as an effective way to understand the personality of the characters then further on the theme and the hidden motivations of Faulkner in writing this novel.

Freud's theory of the unconscious, which is also called "depth psychology" offers a topographical point of view to see "the mind as having a three-fold division:

conscious, preconscious and unconscious” (Wright 10). According to Freud, consciousness can be taken as the perception system, the sensing and ordering of the external world. The preconscious includes physical acts that are “capable of becoming conscious” (Freud *FRUA* 8). The unconscious consists of all that has been kept out of the preconscious-conscious system. In this model of the psyche, the unconsciousness, which is made up of instinctual impulses, repressed experience, desires, emotions and wills, is particularly stressed by Freud and is raised as “the true psychic reality” (Freud *ID* 445). It is characterized by its timeless processes, which are not organized in order and nor altered by the passage of time, since everything is subject to the pleasure principle, that is, the seeking for satisfaction drives man to act. In *The Sound and the Fury*, Faulkner explores the entire area of mental process, from unconsciousness on through the levels of the mind up to and including the highest one of rational, communicable awareness. This is surprisingly in correspondence with Freud’s “depth-psychology”. We may say that it is by means of the latter can we locate made-up stream of consciousness in Faulkner’s work.

The foundation of Freud’s contribution to modern psychology is his emphasis on the unconscious aspects of the human psyche. A brilliant creative genius, Freud provided convincing evidence, through his many carefully recorded case studies, that most of our actions are motivated by psychological forces over which we have very limited control (Guerin 127). As Freud has illustrated, the personality construct is a multi-layered unity, comprising the id, the unconscious instincts and impulses; the ego, one’s own perception or experience, that part of mind capable of reasoning, feeling and acting; and the super-ego, the moral or judging property of the mind, acting as conscience (Guerin 128). The id is the reservoir of libido, the primary source of all psychic energy, without regard for social conventions, legal ethics, or moral restraint. It functions to fulfill the primordial life principle, which Freud considers to be the pleasure principle. As the rational governing agent of the psyche, the ego regulates the instinctual drives of the id so that they may be released in nondestructive behavioral patterns. Whereas the id is governed solely by the pleasure

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